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The school is a basic instrument in securing the American goals of equal opportunity for personal fulfillment. Every effort must be made to achieve racially integrated schools, for the presence of children from varied racial, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds is an important element in the preparation of young people for participation in modern society.

Several guidelines are suggested to assist local school boards in developing effective programs and in achieving and maintaining integrated schools. Educational administrative officers should seek to promote interracial learning experiences as a criterion for measuring educational effectiveness and for evaluating planning in their school systems. Specific inservice training programs should be developed to aid teachers in understanding the place of various racial, ethnic, and religious groups in the history of our Nation. Employment of teachers of various racial and ethnic groups contributes to a worthwhile interchange of groups in the classroom. To develop an understanding among adults about problems of intercultural relationships, schools and community centers should be utilized. Instructional materials for classroom use should be selected on the basis of their contribution to intergroup understanding and appreciation. Finally, several administrative practice should be evaluated as to adaptability to local situations and utilized under appropriate conditions. The practices are relief of overcrowding, regrouping of grades, open enrollment and school redistricting and relocation.

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Suggested Guidelines

. . . . FOR PROVIDING FOR THE MAXIMAL EDUCATION OF CHILDREN OF ALL RACES AND CREEDS IN THE SCHOOLS OF MICHIGAN . . . .

[A REPORT TO THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION FROM THE STATE COMMITTEE ON EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY]

Publication No. 541

Published by
The Department of Public Instruction
Lynn M. Bartlett, State Superintendent
Lansing, Michigan
1964

TO THE CITIZENS OF MICHIGAN:

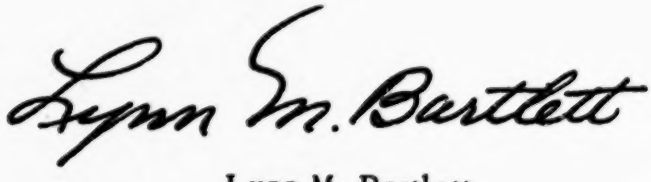
During the summer of 1963, I was among the educational leaders invited by President Kennedy to a meeting in Washington to discuss racial problems as related to education. Following my return to Michigan and in accord with President Kennedy's request, I called together a group of about sixty school administrators to discuss the nature and complexity of this important question in Michigan. It was agreed it would be advisable for me to appoint an advisory committee made up of educators, citizens, and representatives of interested civic groups in the state to consider further this important matter.

The first meeting of this committee led to a recommendation that a small steering committee be formed to develop a set of guidelines for use by local school boards and administrators in providing equal educational opportunities for all youth regardless of race or creed. This steering committee, made up of people representing widely different interests and holding divergent points of view, met frequently over a period of time and worked very conscientiously, spending a considerable amount of time on their task. After much discussion of all concerns and viewpoints, the members reached a position agreeable and acceptable to all. In view of the strong feelings and the emotional nature of the problem, this was an outstanding accomplishment and has resulted in what I feel is not only an excellent philosophic statement but one which also deals with specific recommendations for consideration by local schools. The statement was recommended for my adoption and has now been distributed to all school districts, universities and colleges, and several other groups in the state.

I feel that this document is a fine testimonial to the fact that people holding what may initially appear to be differing and irreconcilable points of view can meet and intelligently work out their differences. While several other states have prepared statements of guidelines, I believe that this work by Michigan educators is unique and goes beyond many previous efforts in that it takes a positive

approach and suggests the kinds of steps that can be taken by local districts to provide for more equal educational opportunities. I wish to acknowledge with respect and gratitude the efforts of all the people who participated in the discussions and planning that produced the guidelines. I am sure that schools concerned with this pressing problem will be able to find numerous suggestions and guidance in this valuable document which will make possible the more effective organization of school programs so that the needs of all youth are better met.

Cordially yours,



Lynn M. Bartlett

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The task of assuring equal educational opportunity is a challenge to our total society. This challenge includes citizenship, employment, housing, religion, education, etc. Each of these contributes to the fulfillment of equal educational opportunity and toward the achievement of our democratic goals. Although this statement is primarily concerned with the role of education, it must be recognized that these goals are interdependent and must operate simultaneously in order to accomplish our desired aims. While our charge is to spell out the educational implications, full and complete integration depends upon the democratic operation of all our civil rights.

I. PREAMBLE

The schools of this country represent America's hope and plan for a better society. The public school--open to all, regardless of race, economic status, or creed--was and is a basic institution through which Americans are to be prepared for cultural, economic, and political participation in our community.

America has asserted from the start that our democratic goals cannot merely be expressed through written documents or verbal pronouncements. We recognized very early that personal associations are important for the realization of these goals. Thus: American education, through the public schools, must provide the opportunity for all children of various ethnic, racial, religious, and economic backgrounds to meet, learn, and work together.

Today we recognize that this goal has not been fully realized. Educators, citizens, and courts assert that prevention of personal associations through segregation--whether "de jure" or "de facto"--seriously affects the quality of education. Segregation, particularly involuntary segregation, whether it is social, ethnic, economic, or racial, diminishes equality of educational opportunity for all children. If Michigan's schools are to achieve our state and national democratic goals, sound educational procedures and practices must be created by all schools to overcome these obstacles to equality of educational opportunity in all school districts.

II. A STATEMENT OF BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES

Under our system of laws, it is the primary responsibility of each community to provide equal educational opportunities for all children in terms of quality of instruction, adequacy of facilities and instructional materials, and opportunity for personal fulfillments. The latter can be accomplished to an adequate degree in our democracy only when the policies and practices of the school system place a positive emphasis upon achieving and maintaining racially integrated school systems. Providing this equity in educational opportunities is a part of the process of educational planning, done by cooperative means consistent with the basic educational philosophy of our state.

III. FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

A. The school has long been viewed as a basic social instrument in obtaining our traditional American goals of equal opportunity for personal fulfillment.

B. The presence of children in all schools from varied racial, cultural and/or socio-economic backgrounds is an important element in the preparation of young people for participation in the social and political affairs of our democracy.

C. In forming school policies, every educationally sound action should be taken to insure not merely passive tolerance but active acceptance of and genuine respect for children from every segment of the community.

D. Public schools must make certain that in all their policies and practices the dignity of each child be respected regardless of ethnic, racial, or religious backgrounds. They must also be certain that in all their acts they transmit the belief and conviction that all children should be educated to their fullest potential and that no group or school in any manner should be regarded as inferior or superior.

E. A community school offers important educational values which should not be overlooked. The relation between the school and the community with which it is identified can in many cases offer important educational values and lead to more effective participation by parents and other citizens in the support and guidance of the school. Yet, when a community school becomes exclusive in fact or spirit, i.e., is being reserved for certain community groups, to the exclusion of others, it does not serve the purpose of democratic education.

IV. GUIDELINES

It is recognized that meeting the challenge of racial segregation and discrimination is a responsibility of both state and national government. Yet, solutions to such problems in the field of education must be resolved at the local level. Therefore, each community should publicly acknowledge its responsibility for achieving an integrated school system and should see that this responsibility is defined and administratively implemented in a manner that is in keeping with sound educational and democratic measures.

The following guidelines, where individually or collectively appropriate to a school district, are suggested to assist local school boards develop effective programs and to achieve and maintain integrated school systems.

A. Boards of education and educational administrative officers should assume a basic responsibility for resolving negative attitudes which may retard racial integration of the school system:

   1. They should seek assistance from public agencies, universities, professional organizations, community groups, and other sources, which would offer an opportunity to remove racial integration from the arena of emotion to that of professional, educational orientation in which educational decisions are made.

   2. They should initiate reports and/or studies which clearly delineate the presence or absence of circumstances within a community that contribute to the development and/or maintenance of racially segregated schools and/or discriminatory practices.

   3. They should seek to promote school programs and school districts in which inter-racial learning experiences become a criterion by which educational effectiveness is measured and by which educational planning is evaluated.

B. It is the responsibility of each community and school district to educate its youth for responsible and effective participation in a democratic society. Circumstances do

not always allow for the same degree of active participation with students of differing racial and ethnic backgrounds. The geographic distribution of population in our state is so varied that minority groups while present in great density in one area may be almost totally absent in another. Despite these differences in population concentration, the following guidelines have some degree of application to all school districts of the state.

1. Place the responsibility on colleges and universities in the training and preparation of teachers to emphasize more strenuously the ramifications and implications of intercultural relationships as they affect a community and influence the growth and development of young people.

2. Colleges, universities, and school districts should plan practice teaching experiences to maximize exposure to communities and/or areas where there are diversified racial and ethnic school populations.

3. Specific in-service training programs should be developed to aid teachers in achieving a broad background and understanding of the role played by various racial, ethnic, national, and religious groups in the history and development of our nation. Developing positive attitudes in these areas will enable teachers to work more effectively in developing similar worthwhile attitudes on the part of their students.

4. To carry out the principle of interchange of groups, student contacts in their regular curricula with teachers of several racial and/or ethnic groups will contribute materially to the worthwhile development of students in schools which are otherwise relatively homogeneous.

5. Instructional materials are important tools for all phases of the instructional process. In selecting such materials, it is important that proper attention be given to the degree to which the materials con-

tribute toward positive intergroup understanding and appreciation, as well as appropriate motivation of the individual student.

6. Schools and community centers should be utilized within each community to develop an understanding and insight among adults about the problems growing out of intercultural relationship. Boards of education and educational administrative officers should assume a basic responsibility for promoting such community programs.

7. What may be possible for older age groups may not necessarily be educationally sound for younger children. There are a number of administrative practices that have been initiated or recommended in other parts of the country which should be evaluated as to their adaptability to local situations. These would include:

   a. Relief of Overcrowding

      The need for relief from overcrowded conditions in a school provides an opportunity for integration. Measures taken should be carried out in a manner that promotes integration in the receiving school.

   b. Regrouping of Grades

      Two or more adjacent schools are combined in a single attendance area. Rather than have all grades in each school, the first three grades for a larger area may be assigned to a building and the next three grades for the larger area assigned to another building.

   c. Open Enrollment

      A child may attend a school outside of his school area if another school is not already filled by children from its regular attendance area. In these instances, positive action should be taken to insure maximum integration and utilization of the open school.

d. Redistricting and/or School Relocation

When redistricting or relocation of schools is necessary and when new school sites are being selected, these efforts should be guided by principles which promote integration.

e. Special School Centers for reading, science, mathematics, etc. established in schools at central points where boys and girls from several schools, with varied racial and ethnic backgrounds can work together.

f. Any Other Method Which Might Promote Integration while continuing to maintain staff effectiveness, achieve positive educational and sound physical plant efficiency, and assure against inferior academic programs.

8. Within the framework of their educational philosophy, public, private, and parochial schools have a special responsibility to provide for children opportunities to gain experiences with children who have differing socio-economic, religious, racial or ethnic backgrounds in ways which contribute to appreciation of their equality and dignity as individuals.

V. CONCLUSION

Today, the various school systems are being challenged to provide positive demonstrations of democratic living. This challenge demands that the school systems must evaluate all phases of their program to insure that in fact, as well as theory, they offer equality of educational opportunity to all children within their respective communities. Implicit in this evaluation is the school's responsibility to provide an educational environment which offers the opportunity to each child for racially integrated learning experiences. Where the geographical distribution of population makes integration impossible, every opportunity in educational programming should be employed to reduce the impact of this educational handicap. It is our belief that the adoption of the above principles of educational practice by all school districts in the State of Michigan is important if they are to effectively meet their responsibility of preparing their respective student bodies for maximum participation in our democratic society.

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